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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0382

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

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STATE FOR WHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH SOCIAL LEADERS

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b & d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador hosted an August 8 meeting with leaders of the pro-Zelaya social movements, in response to a request from President Zelaya. These leaders represent the radical left-wing support base of the Zelaya movement. Participants were agrarian movement leader Rafael Alegria, feminist Sara Alisa Rosales, labor leader Israel Salinas, indigenous leader Salvador Zuniga, and lawyer Rodil Rivera Rodil. The social leaders said that if no political accord were achieved by August 14, they would recommend: 1) that President Zelaya go into hiding; and 2) a general boycott of the elections. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador warned against promoting violence and said social conflict would undermine President Zelaya's return. He cited the U.S. condemnation of the coup, the "no contact" policy, the suspension of military aid and the "pause" in economic assistance. He said that Honduras had been suspended from the inter-American system, and this included lending from the Inter-American Development Bank. The Ambassador stressed U.S. support for the Arias mediation effort as the most viable way to restore the democratic order and achieve reconciliation in a badly divided nation.

¶3. (C) The social leaders asked for the United States to increase its pressure on the de facto regime. They asked for the United States to remove the Ambassador, remove U.S. troops from the Honduran air base at Palmerola, suspend additional visas, freeze bank accounts, and consider additional economic sanctions.

¶4. (C) The social leaders said that if there was no resolution by Friday, August 14, they might consider the San Jose Accords "a failure." They would recommend that President Zelaya go into hiding and a call for a general boycott of the election campaign.

¶5. (C) The social leaders accepted the Ambassador's message of "non-violence," and said the only time protestors threw stones was when they had been attacked by police. They emphasized the social movements were "unarmed" and would continue to practice non-violence.

¶6. (C) Comment: While they do not speak for the majority of the demographic groups they claim to represent, these leaders exert a large degree of influence among the various

pro-Zelaya social movements, and represent the hard left-wing core of the movement. Many, particularly Rafael Alegria, have a close relationship with President Zelaya. Local pundits allege that Alegria has ties to and gets funding from Chavez. All seemed to agree that time was running short; we anticipate that they will exert additional pressure on Zelaya to become more radical if negotiations do not make significant progress in the coming week. End Comment.  
LLORENS